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ABSTRACT

This paper reports findings of a retrospective longitudinal reconstruction of child welfare service activities in Canada. The first section discusses demographic developments and the child welfare services. It is reported that the increase in the number of children in care in the 20-year period from 1940 to 1960 was to some extent a reflection of the general growth in the child population, and that while developments after 1959 continued earlier growth trends in the welfare services, the number of births declined. Subsequent sections of the paper discuss residential care, foster care and adoption services. The following trends in these services are noted: residential care has increased: foster homes took most children entering care during the 1960's and early 1970's: the average age of children in care has tended to rise: adoptions by stepparents and relatives have become numerically most important. The final section discusses prevention and protection services. It is reported that children receiving protection services appear to come from larger families. Parental failure, neglect, desertion, illness and inability to provide treatment, education and training are said to be the main factors leading to the need for preventive and protective services. Traditional child welfare services are described as an after the fact, rescue service. Preventive services, as presently provided, are said to involve risks for children. It is suggested that policies and programs which address the immediate issue of family breakdown are needed. (Author/RH)

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# The How, Why and What of Child Welfare Services

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## The How, Why and What of Child Welfare Services

### The Development of the Baseline Study

There has been relatively little study at the national level of the people ultimately receiving cost-shared provincial services, among which the child welfare services are one of the more important. In a review of Canadian personal social services in the period 1973 to 1975, I examined some aspects of the child welfare services, services for abused and battered children, and residential services for children in care, and some related services including child day care services and family planning services.[1] My conclusion was that a fuller study of the child welfare services, and especially of two of the major aspects of the services omitted from the former study, foster care and adoption, should be undertaken. In the fall of 1975 I was authorized by my then employer, the Canadian Council on Social Development to commence such a study.

The relative dearth of published information or research on the child welfare services at the national level posed questions about how a national study should be undertaken. The initial plan was to conduct a contemporary review of the services using a methodology similar to that employed for the earlier study. A detailed outline for data collection was prepared encompassing all the relevant levels of service operation and documentation on legislation, policies, regulations, organization, structure, levels and types of service provision, target populations, clientele, availability, accessibility, and estimates of effectiveness. This outline was then submitted to a group of advisers, all actively involved in the delivery or study of the child welfare services, for comment. As a consequence of this process the outline was slightly enlarged to make it reflect more accurately the range of activities in provincial child welfare services.

It was recognized that the information available was not likely to throw light directly on the important questions, (1) why children come into care, (2) how they come into care, and (3) what happens to them in care. These questions suggested the need to get at some of the more dynamic aspects of the child welfare system, to get some idea of the flow of children in and out of care, and why this might be happening. What

dictated the level of activity in the services? Was it a question of developments in the services themselves, perhaps improved staffing or changes in policies? Or did demographic factors determine to some extent the supply of children needing care?

Initial compilation of statistics for some of the main variables involved suggested that a retrospective longitudinal reconstruction of child welfare activities might provide added depth to the contemporary perspective of the services originally planned. It might at least say something about where the services had come from, and raise questions about where they were going to. I therefore decided to proceed along these lines for all ten provinces.

The sources of information most readily available were annual reports of the provincial departments of welfare or social services extending back to the early 1960's. Some provinces have annual reports extending back very much earlier, but these are the exception. Some provinces also reported their activities in a very fragmentary way in the late 1950's and early 1960's. It is worth noting here that a number of provinces have reverted to this fragmentary reporting style in the more glossy reports of the 1970's. I was however greatly assisted by access to the unpublished statistics kept by all provincial child welfare services.

## Demographic Developments and the Child Welfare Services

The calendar year 1959 and the fiscal year 1959/60 were chosen as the starting point for the systematic collection of data. I did however sketch in the earlier history of the child welfare services in each province. For example, Canada Year Books of the 1930's and 1940's provide some national statistics on children in institutions and in the care of children's aid societies. It seems reasonably certain that 40,000 children were in care during the 1930's and 1940's. Rather more than half of these children were in institutions of one kind or another. By 1940 though "a decided trend from institutional to foster care" was noted.[2] In 1939 there were

not less than 2,000 legal adoptions as well as "an unascertained number of agreements called adoptions" taking place annually.[3]

Prior to 1959 most provinces had a basic set of child welfare services and institutions. The distribution and delivery of services were very much better in some provinces than in others. Some provinces exercised highly centralized control, others were decentralized; in Ontario control was highly decentralized through more than 50 children's aid societies. In some provinces service coverage was very poor. In Newfoundland child welfare services were only separated from social assistance services in the early 1960's and made more specialized.

Although child welfare services had grown considerably after the Second World War, during the early 1960's they were still very much underdeveloped in many provinces. The available evidence suggests that child welfare was very much a residual, rescue, last resort type of service. Children relinquished for adoption were perhaps viewed somewhat differently by the child welfare services than were other children in need of care, but part at least of this difference was that they could very rapidly be placed for adoption and were therefore not long a charge on the public purse; that was the hope and the policy.

The calendar year 1959 marked the peak year of the post-war baby boom. There were 479,000 births and the highest ever number of babies under one year old in the country. At this stage I think it is reasonable to hypothesize that the increase in the number of children in care in the twenty year period 1940 to 1960 was to some extent a reflection of the general growth in the child population.[4]

Developments after 1959 continued earlier growth trends in the child welfare services, but must be set against a declining number of births. By 1973 for example there were 343,000 births annually, 136,000 less than there were in 1959. Though the number of births was declining, the number of illegitimate births climbed from 20,221 in 1959 to 35,588 in 1970, and then declined to 31,005 in 1973.[5]

In 1959/60 there were 52,120 children in care, of whom about 15,000 or 29 per cent were in institutions. There were also about 12,800 completed adoptions. The number of children in care had grown to 80,000 in 1966, and there were 16,400 completed adoptions. By 1970 there were 98,400 children in care and 20,300 completed adoptions. In 1977 the number of children in care had fallen to 78,400 and there were 16,400 completed adoptions.

We can, I believe, begin to relate the overall population change to changes in the child welfare population and to what the child welfare services are doing. In the early 1960's the child welfare services had already experienced continuous growth in their work for a number of years. Provincial annual reports of this period speak of a lack of resources, of an inability to perform statutory duties, of older more difficult children in care, of a need for more foster homes, more group homes and more adoption applicants.[6]

These pressures were, I believe, one of the factors that led to the creation in 1966 of the federal, cost-sharing Canada Assistance Plan. The lack of facilities and the low foster care rates, for example were a recurrent refrain of the provincial annual reports in the early 1960's. The federal Canada Assistance Plan came just in time to relieve some of the pressures on the provincial child welfare services. Most provincial governments responded by hiring more staff and reorganizing their services.

Residential Care

The role of institutional or residential care of children in Canada has not as yet been adequately studied. Despite a general belief that institutional care was less and less used in the post war period, the present study found almost thirty per cent of children in care still living in what were designated as institutions or residential homes in 1959/60. Though there have been a number of changes which affect this sector of care, some 18,200 children or 23 per cent of all children in care were located in institutional or residential type services in 1976/77. This figure probably understates the

number of children living in these types of facilities but not falling under child welfare auspices. In recent years Health and Welfare Canada figures show a steady increase in the number of rated beds; that is those eligible for cost-sharing by the federal government under the Canada Assistance Plan. There were 30,700 rated beds for children in 1977. Some 16,600 of the rated beds were in Quebec, and of these the vast majority (15,300) were in homes with a capacity of over 50 beds.

Foster Care

It was, however, foster homes which took the bulk of children entering care during the 1960's and early 1970's. From 1963/64 to 1973/74 foster homes cared for more then 60 per cent of children in care at any one time, 70 per cent in 1966/67. The number of children in foster homes rose from 28,605 in 1959/60 to 65,139 in 1969/70 and fell to 44,849 in 1976/77. Under pressure the child welfare services turned to the placement resource which was most readily available and most economical.

Though foster care rates improved after 1966, the provincial annual reports still expressed concern about the supply of foster parents. The debt of gratitude owed to foster parents was frequently also mentioned. What was less often mentioned during the 1960's, but has been discussed more during the 1970's was the question of standards. How do we explain the change? It is important, I believe, to recognize the nature of the constraints on the child welfare services. The demand for foster homes during the 1960's does seem to have elicited an increased supply of homes, yet contemporary comments on the situation indicate that maintenance rates were not high enough. How then was the supply increased? In accepting and using the available foster homes, were the child welfare services taking whatever was available to them? What is it, for example, about child welfare services that always conveys a sense of strain, a sense of crisis? There are obviously real anxieties for people involved in trying to provide adequately for abused and neglected children. But there is also

the context in which this work has to be performed. There is little reason to doubt that the absolute lack of resources was a serious problem for the child welfare services in the early and late 1960's. We are hearing similar concerns expressed during the late 1970's. Again demands seem to exceed resources.

Federal contributions to the child welfare services have declined in terms of 1971 constant dollars (using the Implicit Price Index for government current expenditure on goods and services.)[7] Although this decline is partly explicable in terms of the number of children in care at any one time, it is not explicable in terms of the overall level of activitiy in the child welfare services. Taking the four census years 1961/62, 1966/67, 1971/72 and 1976/77, the number of admissions to care has risen steadily, and the general level of activity measured in terms of admissions, discharges and children in care has also risen. For the provinces for which fairly full staffing statistics are available, the numbers of staff have also risen, as have the number of rated beds for children in homes for special care. In the ten year period 1967 to 1977 the rise in the number of rated beds was 64 per cent. Some of the expenditures for these homes is hidden in overall expenditures for homes for special care for adults and children. I think we can conclude that substantial additional resources have not become available for foster care as the overall number of children in care has declined.

At the same time the average age of children in care has tended to rise partly as a consequence of fewer very young children being relinquished for adoption, and partly perhaps because the general child population has been aging. Child welfare services have become responsible in many provinces for delinquents who are older children and who thus tend to push the average age of children in care upwards. It is perhaps not surprising that both foster parents and social workers report how difficult it is to care for these older, often delinquent and disturbed, children. What is interesting though is that their comments echo the sentiments expressed in the provincial annual reports of the 1960's.

There are thus a number of factors which may be combining to reduce the number of people willing to be foster parents: (1) Maintenance rates are still modest; (2) Foster children are often older and more difficult to care for; (3) Child welfare services have emphasized higher standards in recent years; (4) Other factors such as alternative employment opportunities for foster parents, and smaller homes may result in fewer people able and willing to be foster parents.

Adoption Services

After residential care and foster homes, adoption homes are the other major placement resource of the child welfare services, (if children's own homes are discounted.) Children in adoption homes on probation constituted 10 per cent of all children in care in 1959/60. The reduction in length of the probation period from 12 to 6 months in most provinces during the early 1960's led to some reduction in the proportionate importance of adoption homes. However the actual number of children in these homes rose steadily from 4,600 in 1961/62 to 8,000 in 1969/70. The number then fell by half to 4,000 in 1975/76 only to rise again to 6,300 in 1976/77.

These figures are not an altogether reliable guide to adoption homes as a child welfare resource since in at least one province, (British Columbia), many infants placed for adoption are not included in the in-care statistics. The association between adoptions and the child welfare services has in many ways become less strong in recent years. A minority of adoptions now are the result of agency placements. Instead adoptions by stepparents and relatives have become numerically most important. Adoption is a simple term for an increasingly complex social institution. Though the rise and fall in the number of adoptions tends to mirror the rise and fall in the number of illegitimate births, the one is not simply a reflection of the other. Most adoptions now involve a natural parent of the child being adopted.

The 13,500 adoptions in 1960/61 represented 2.8 per cent of the total child population under one year old in that year. The comparable figures for 1971/72 are 20,200 adoptions and 5.6 per cent of the children under one year old. Despite a drop in the number of adoptions in recent years proportionately more children are now being adopted than in the early 1960's.

The other major reversal, which may be a partial explanation of these developments, is the change from scarcity to surplus of people applying to be adoptive parents. Just as foster homes were in scarce supply in the early 1960's so were adoption applicants, and especially for children belonging to particular religious and/or ethnic groups. One of the reasons for recent developments is the decline in the number of illegitimate births after 1970, but another is the increasing proportion of unmarried mothers choosing to keep their babies.

The child welfare services made strenuous efforts during the 1960's to secure adoption applicants. In doing so they helped to popularize the institution of adoption itself. It is possible also today that many people feel more economically able to adopt children.[8]

The Why, How and What Questions

This discussion of the main findings of the child welfare services has so far left out any mention of prevention and protection services, that is those other activities of the child welfare services which do not directly involve children being admitted to and discharged from care. If one were to devise a hierarchy of involvement for the child welfare services, prevention and protection services would, despite their importance, come near the bottom simply because the intensity and/or duration of contact is less than for the in-care services.

Looked at in a static way, the child welfare services were faced with the biggest demand for services in the late 1960's, when the number of

children in care coincided with the general child population aged 0-19 years being at its highest level and with the number of illegitimate births, also being at the highest point ever. Using 1961/62 as a base year 100, the actual number of admissions in 1966/67 was 142.3, in 1971/72 was 148.5, and in 1976/77 was 159.1. The growth rate was 42.3 per cent between 1961/62 and 1966/67, 4.4 per cent between 1966/67 and 1971/72, and 7.1 per cent between 1971/72 and 1976/77. The bulk of the increased demand thus came in the early sixties. But the number of admissions continued to rise throughout the period.

If we take the combination of admissions and discharges as a percentage of the number of children in care at the end of each year we again get a steadily increasing rate of activity, 74.8 per cent in 1961/62, 79.2 per cent in 1966/67, 83.9 per cent in 1971/72 and 95.8 per cent in 1976/77. Similar results are obtained for children in care at the beginning of the year added to admissions during the year and taken as a percentage of children in care at the end of the year.

The number of children in care at one time again using 1961/62 as the base year was 144.0 in 1966/67, 158.1 in 1971/72 and 135.5 in 1976/77. The proportion of change was 44 per cent between 1961/62 and 1966/67, 9.8 per cent between 1966/67 and 1971/72 and minus 14.3 per cent between 1971/72 and 1976/77. If these proportions are seen as a reflection of the extent to which children admitted to care actually stay in care, then the likelihood of this happening appears to have been much greater in the early sixties than in subsequent years.

It is easy to see why the child welfare services felt themselves to be under siege during the early sixties, and why energetic efforts were made to reduce some of the pressure. Basically these efforts appear to have involved two strategies, (a) securing more resources and (b) preventing children from being admitted to care.

Whether the pressure on the child welfare services during the early 1960's was one of the main reasons why the Canada Assistance Plan was introduced is hard to say. Provincial child welfare services were however saying that they could not perform their statutory duties with the level of resources given to them. The implementation of the Canada Assistance Plan did provide some much needed relief for some provincial child welfare services. In Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland, for example the creation of more professional child welfare positions was reported. In Ontario there was a 30 per cent increase in the number of social work positions between 1966 and 1971, a continuation of a trend apparent from 1960 onwards. In Saskatchewan there was no growth in the total number of positions in the Department of Social Services between 1966 and 1971, but rapid growth thereafter. Although I believe the Canada Assistance Plan has provided more resources for the development of provincial social services, these examples serve to show that the effect was not necessarily direct or immediate.[9] We are again forced to recognize that child welfare services are part of the political process at the provincial level, and pressure for change and improvement has to occur there.

It is apparent that the main impact of the Canada Assistance Plan came when the demographic pressures on the child welfare services were already easing. The number of children aged 0-14 years was 12 per cent less in 1977 than in 1967. During the same period the number of beds in children's homes rated for cost-sharing rose by some 64 per cent; this rise may not entirely reflect new resources, but it does suggest greater flexibility in terms of placement resources than was previously possible.

We have then a situation in which the child welfare services expanded their resources when the child population was already declining. The constituents of the demands on the services were changing. The number of illegitimate births declined after 1970. A lower proportion of admissions to care involved children relinquished for adoptions or children of unmarried mothers. Not surprisingly the proportion of children admitted for reasons of neglect or protection also rose. The average age of children in care was also higher.

Increased resources in the form of adoption homes, foster homes, residential facilities and more staff, (partly a result of the Canada Assistance Plan), coincided with the overall decline in the child population aged 0-19 years after 1969. There was thus some opportunity to redeploy resources, and engage in activities which were previously not possible. More emphasis for example was placed on placement of children with special needs. The overall increase in the level of activities in the in-care services, and the decrease in the number of children in care suggests briefer periods were being spent in care perhaps on a more planned basis.

As indicated above one strategy for limiting or reducing demands on the in-care services during the 1960's was development of prevention or protection services. The statistical and descriptive material on these services is somewhat fragmentary.

What do the preventive services, variously named protection and family services do? Generally these services deal with children and families at risk -- that is situations in which neglect and/or abuse may ultimately lead to the children being admitted to care. One primary objective is to prevent this eventuality. These services have a double function then of preventing a child coming into care, but also of bringing him in early enough if the need arises. This ambiguous function clearly holds some risks, the justification for the provision of the service being a presumption that the child is already neglected or abused.

A linkage between protection and in-care services is shown in the Ontario protection statistics. In the period 1960 to 1977 the number of children who received protection services before transfer to the 'in-care' services rose from 3,700 to 8,450 and as a percentage of admissions to care went from 49 to 72 per cent. At the same time the total number of open cases was 18,700 involving 53,000 children in 1960, 29,900 cases involving 82,300 children in 1969 and 37,300 cases involving 88,200 children in 1977. An analysis of new and reopened protection cases shows that the average number of children involved in each case is consistently higher than the average for all families in Ontario and Canada for the years 1961, 1966, 1971 and 1976. In other words children receiving protection services appear to come from larger families. At the same time the average

number of children involved in reopened protecting cases is consistently higher than that for new cases.

The linkage between Ontario's protection and in-care services suggests that for many children admission to care is a slow process, various alternatives to admission being tried first. If this is indeed the case the presenting problems within a child's family are likely to be of a chronic rather than an acute kind, and the actual size of the family may have something to do with why neglect occurs.

British Columbia provides a more detailed breakdown of the reasons why children are admitted to care. Parental failure, neglect, desertion, illness and inability to provide treatment, education and training are the main contributory factors given. Physical abuse was the reason given for less than three per cent of admissions in 1976/77.

There has been an increase in the number of cases receiving preventive family services in British Columbia in the period 1966/67 to 1976/77, but changes in record keeping make the interpretation of the statistics difficult. A similar situation obtains in Nova Scotia and other provinces. The available statistics suggest a substantial rise in the number of protection cases since the early and mid-sixties, probably a reflection of the increased resources made available to the child welfare services by the Canada Assistance Plan.

A number of provinces record the development of preventive services such as child day care, homemaker and nutritional programs, but do not directly link them with the child welfare services. It is however apparent that some of these programs are being provided under the Canada Assistance Plan to people in economic need. The direct evidence linking poverty and child neglect is not spelt out in provincial records. However a pattern of cumulative disadvantage is suggested. The protection services make a variety of efforts to counter this disadvantage. Native children, who are very much overrepresented in the in-care population, are one example where the absence of appropriate effective support services makes reversal of the disadvantage impossible.

Some British research has suggested that the number of applications for admissions to care varies considerably from one local authority to another, and in turn the proportion of this number that are refused also varies considerably. Authorities with a low rate of applications have a high rate of refusals, a low rate of admissions, a low rate of discharges and a low proportion of the child population in care.[10]

Similar variations are apparent in Canada, but some of the more detailed information on the rates of applications and refusal is not available. Generally a higher proportion of the child population aged 0-14 years or 0-19 years was in care in 1976/77 than in 1961/62. In most provinces the populations rose to a high point in 1971/72 and then fell to a level of about the 1966/67 level. It is interesting to note that Ontario had a lower percentage of the child population in care in 1976/77 than in the three previous census years 1961/62, 1966/67 and 1971/72. In other words Ontario had found some way of reducing the number of children actually staying in care. The growth of its protection services and the nature of its service delivery system would seem to provide the most logical explanation. The relative density of the service system may provide a fairly good way of rationing the delivery of child welfare services, or at least of containing demands.

As indicated at the outset the present study was not designed to answer the 'why' 'how' and 'what' questions in the child welfare services. The demographic trends provide some explanation why the child welfare services encountered growing demands for services until 1970. The efforts to contain these demands led to an increased emphasis on adoption as a placement resource. At the same time adoption began to reflect other trends and changes in society.

An increasing number of foster homes and residential places were sought during the 1960's. Foster homes in particular expanded in number to accommodate the bulge in the in-care population. Increased maintenance payments may have helped the recruitment of more foster homes. The overall number of residential places also increased, and the size of these establishments fell. As pressure on the services eased, more emphasis was placed on

standards, on protection services and other alternatives to "in-care" services.

In another sense though the pressures have not eased. Fiscal constraint and inflation have made the operation of the enlarged child welfare services more difficult. The public concern about child abuse has focussed attention on the very real remaining deficiencies of the services. What happens to children in their own homes and what happens to them when they are the clients of the child welfare services have come to seem very closely related questions.

What is also apparent is that traditional categorical approaches to the problems of child neglect are at best palliative measures. The isolation of the child welfare services from other highly relevant services such as income assistance, public health services, child day care and so on is a very real problem. Whether the massive institutional reform of our social institutions led to better services for children and families is not clear. The traditional child welfare services still appear to be an after the fact, rescue service, and even the emphasis on preventive services involves risks for children.

Alternative strategies are probably needed. More imaginative policies and programs relating to the needs of families with children would avoid the stigma of the traditional categorical services. Specific attention to the housing and employment needs of the native people would help.

Local case studies of the how, why and what questions might help convince policymakers of the need to make some drastic reforms. But on an intuitive level, the dimensions of the child welfare problem shown by the present study should impress upon us the extent of the avoidable human misery in our society. It is not obvious that our present child welfare interventions really help alleviate or reduce this misery in any significant way.

Apart from children placed for adoption the bulk of children discharged from care return to their own families; this appears to be the case whether the children have been in care a long or short period of time. This finding parallels the outcome in the New York Family Welfare Research Program, where "Five years after placement, 73 per cent of the children in the follow-up

study had been discharged, primarily to the care of their mothers."[11]

If family circumstances do remain substantially unchanged during a child's absence in care, then the reason and justification for removing children from their families in the first place have to be extremely compelling. Some situations leave no option, or apparently no option, but to admit the child to care, emergencies such as the death or illness of parents, abandonment of children, relinquishment for adoption and so on. But even in these situations the child welfare services have to have legal grounds for action, and these are not always available, or not accepted by the court. In most other situations both awareness and the exercise of judgment are required.

It is easy to see why the child welfare services may not serve all children apparently in need of care. They are in many senses reactive to events and not proactive in terms of reaching out for information. Moreover because their social worker and placement resources are finite there are strong motivations for not seeking out more demands for services.

The social worker's place within an agency setting imposes considerable constraints so far as the allocation of resources is involved. Supervisory arrangements, official policies and procedures, and group norms may all influence a social worker's behaviour. Controlling the level of demands that is tolerable and the allocation of resources is important for any service organization.

Child welfare services thus should be seen in their wider organizational setting. The restraints and constraints imposed by governments are real factors influencing the delivery of child welfare services. Other important factors must be considered. Admission to care often requires the sanction of the court. Much depends on the relationship of the child welfare services to the court. Social workers may or may not be able to influence a court's decisions. Because this is so, there may well be a reluctance to initiate court proceedings where the outcome may be other than what the social workers want. Regulation of the flow of work to the court may be one strategy used when the rationing of scarce resources is a prime consideration. The way courts work is also a crucial apsect therefore of the admission to care

process. The how, why, and what questions involve some consideration of the organization involved and of the actors within them. There is some need in studying these questions to follow children through the system.

It is important also to look at the constraints operating on different participants at various points within the child welfare system. Is there continuity and discontinuity in the system? Do social workers change constantly? Do courts change their personnel frequently? Is there a high turnover of foster parents? Are residential care staff trained? These are all questions relevant to the decision about taking children into care.

Child welfare services do help some children, but they do not help them all. It is important therefore to think about alternatives to the present system. Child welfare services need to be part of wider supportive services which exist to help families in their home communities. The categorical approach involves isolation from other services and an unnecessarily restricted range of options.

Conclusions

The present study[12] has sought to put the child welfare services in a wider social and demographic framework. By so doing it becomes possible to think about alernative policies and solutions. The problem of children needing care is part of the wider question of the family's role in a modern industrialized society. The traditional child welfare services should be regarded as only one way of addressing some of the problems faced by family units in our kind of society. Child welfare services involve drastic interventions in the life of families. These interventions place the imprint of failure on parents, when the real problems may lie in the wider social system.

It becomes necessary to devise and articulate policies and programs, which address the immediate issue of family breakdown. But at another level there is a real need to develop broader family policies, which address the needs of families at different life stages. One of these stages is child rearing, and within this process the needs of families with very young children are different from those of families with older children.

Coordination of income support, housing, health, and education policies is required with the explicit goal being the support and maintenance of the integrity and viability of the family unit.

The absence of such coordinating strategies and the continued use of categorical measures simply means perpetuating a situation where weak and vulnerable family units break down on a regular basis. Weakness and vulnerability are definable in terms of family size and composition, in terms of health status, in terms of income and housing needs and so on. They are definable also in terms of the particular kinds of pressures and stresses exerted by employment and social conditions. These contingencies are identifiable and measurable. Counter measures and remedies can be devised. A great deal can be done to support families and their children, given the political will and the necessary resources.

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4. The 0-14 years age group was 3.2 million in 1941 (0-19 years, 4.3 million.) In 1951 it was 4.2 million (0-19 years, 5.3 million.) In 1961 it was 6.2 million (0-19 years, 7.6 million.) In 1971 it was 6.4 million (0-19 years, 8.5 million.) In 1977 it was 5.8 million (0-19 years, 8.2 million.)

5. The illegitimate birth rate was 4.2 per cent in 1959 (4.1 in 1946), 9.6 percent in 1970 and 9.0 per cent in 1973.

6. The child population continued to grow until the late 1960's, and reached a peak of 6.6 million aged 0-14 years in 1966, and 8.5 million aged 0-19 years in 1969. The age group 15-19 years is still at an all time peak today.

7. Department of Finance Canada, Economic Review, April, 1978.

8. Information on the income of adopting families in Nova Scotia suggests a fairly even spread of incomes above and below the average level of incomes of families in Atlantic Canada. Other factors too may play a part in the popularity of adoption, since the growing number of marriages may lead to more childless families seeking adoptive children.

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